

**East Haddam
Conservation Commission**

October 5, 2010

Adopted November 4, 2010

1. Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the East Haddam Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, October 5, 2010, at 7:30 PM at the River House. Cynthia Matthew being in the Chair and the Secretary being Present.

a. Roll Call

Cynthia Matthew, TJ Tarbox, Sue Merrow, Todd Gelston, Nancy Mackinnon, Scot Mackinnon and Paul Stuhlman. Others present: Claire Maeder, Rob Smith, Emmett Lyman.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Ms. Merrow to approve the agenda. Second by Ms. Mackinnon and unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes for 9/2/10

Motion by Ms. Merrow to approve the minutes as amended. Second by Mr. Gelston and unanimously approved. Mr. and Ms. Mackinnon abstained.

4. EMR Pizzinni Tract: Conversation with community member April Posson

Ms. Posson's husband grew up on the Pizzinni property and knows quite a bit about the property. She joined the meeting to ask questions and provide information about the property. Mr. Tarbox asked Ms. Posson where the trails are on the Shoe Rock property. She noted that the trails are the old roads. The old Brook house was washed away in the flood of '82. She also noted that there is a trail, with a railing still alongside it, that runs along the steep embankment of the river. Mr. Mackinnon, Mr. Tarbox and Ms. Posson will walk the trail that Ms. Posson described to the CC.

Mr. Tarbox noted what the long-range plans are for the property. Mr. Ventres is going to check the old bridge abutments for safety to build a foot bridge from Shoe Rock to the Patrell. Ms. Posson noted the foot bridge is an exciting possibility. Ms. Posson expressed hope that no hunting will be allowed on the property. Mr. Tarbox noted Mr. Ventres is the one who provides hunting permits. Mr. Lyman noted that a determination is made using a number of factors for town-owned properties, and the First Selectmen are involved in the decision-making process to allow hunting.

Ms. Posson asked if the paved road on the Patrell property will be maintained. Mr. Smith noted that in order for the road to be maintained, the road sides should be mowed regularly. Ms. Matthew asked Mr. Tarbox to follow up with Mr. Thum regarding getting the fields mowed as well as the road sides mowed and adding a bollard to the opening

Mr. Tarbox discussed how he had met Mrs. Blackford on her property, and there was a well that has not been located. Ms. Posson noted there is a well by the Brook house foundation, and they will look for it when they walk it.

Ms. Mackinnon noted that perhaps the Shoe Rock property is the best next one to conduct an inventory on as part of the Plant and Bird Inventory subcommittee work. She noted that Ms. Posson would be an excellent resource given that she walks it everyday. Ms. Mackinnon would like to discuss further with Ms. Posson.

Mr. Smith noted that north of the Brook house was a racquet ball court at one time.

Ms. Posson asked about cleaning out the old vehicles and trash out of the property. Mr. Mackinnon mentioned he will see if the vehicles are able to be removed piece-meal.

Ms. Merrow highlighted Ms. Posson's love of the property and the sense of place she feels about it and that it makes the work the CC does all the more worthwhile.

5. Old Business

a. Reappointment – N Mackinnon

Ms. Mackinnon expressed an interest to remain as part of the CC.

Ms. Merrow made a motion that Ms. Mackinnon be recommended to remain a member of the CC. Mr. Stuhlman seconded and unanimously approved.

b. Subcommittee updates:

i. Forest Management – T Gelston

Mr. Gelston has toured 3 of 4 companies and should have 4 bids by this weekend for extraction. All bidders want to begin the extraction after the leaves fall. The wood needs to be removed this year or the dead/downed will not have much value going forward. Extraction is imperative. On the east side of the brook, the walk is easy but on the west side, walking can be tough due to the downed/dead trees.

The forester will be asked to review the Town Beach property and then Pizzinni for potential timber harvesting. Mr. Mackinnon asked how new biomass will be introduced upon dropping trees on the properties and if there is sufficient undergrowth to replace a tree. His question is related to the look and feel of the forest over the next 50 to 100 years. Mr. Gelston noted that the timber will be removed and then nature will be allowed to replenish the forest. Mr. Mackinnon asked if a soil sample will be taken and examined. Mr. Gelston will ask the forester to comment on this type of work. Mr. Gelston noted the biggest problem that faces the properties are not new growth but the invasive species – like bittersweet. Ms. Mackinnon asked Mr. Gelston if the forester has any feedback on introducing new biomass that can compete with the invasives.

ii. Boundary Markings – TJ Tarbox

Mr. Tarbox contacted Mr. Walter who then discussed with the Public Works Department helping the CC in their stewardship work. Public Works has cut up the tree that had fallen on the road on Shoe Rock. In addition, rocks were moved as they impeded travel on the roadway.

iii. Community Outreach – P Stuhlman

Mr. Stuhlman visited Franklin Academy and met with Mary Murphy. She noted that the students need a community outreach program. Mr. Stuhlman invited Franklin Academy members to attend the CC meeting. Mr. Stuhlman will follow up with Ms. Murphy further. Mr. Stuhlman asked that Mr. Tarbox think about any activities that need to be done which students can undertake.

Ms. Mackinnon has been contacted by a local Cub Scout leader who is looking for a project. Ms. Mackinnon asked the group for some ideas either with the Land Trust or the CC. Ms.

Merrow suggested blue bird house creation which Mr. Tarbox noted will be posted on the Patrell property. Mr. Stuhlman noted that they could also do an inventory project as well.

iv. Plant and Bird Inventory – P Carlson and N Mackinnon

Ms. Mackinnon is interested in remaining as part of this subcommittee and feels the Shoe Rock tract makes the most sense as the next one to inventory.

v. Trail Guide – C Matthew

There are two projects associated with the Trail Guide – quick hit trail guide reproduction and a longer-term new trail guide. Ms. Matthew, Ms. Maeder, Mr. Smith and Ms. Hawkins will be involved. The quick-hits project will highlight selected trails. Next steps are to find out if the guide is in electronic format and then the work will be divided up among the subcommittee.

c. Review of Open Space spreadsheet and prioritization plan

Regarding the High Appeal column, Mr. Stuhlman noted that his idea was around finding ways to appeal to town residents who are interested in open space and protecting the land. It is a way for the CC to decide where to invest its time and energy. Further discussion is needed.

6. Next meeting – proposed special meeting November 4th instead of election day

7. Other discussion

Ms. Matthew noted that further discussion will be held regarding hunting on town-owned properties at a future meeting.

Mr. Tarbox noted that he found that Roundup kills burning bush, which is an invasive. The method is to inject it so there is no overspray. He asked for the CC to keep Roundup in mind for clean up.

Ms. Mackinnon noted that the Ecological Landscape Association has a good write up on Roundup.

Mr. Gelston noted that the Town of East Haddam has created a special fund for the subcommittee to husband the lands. Ms. Matthew offered the congratulations of the entire CC in the creation of the special fund.

Reappointments have been provided to the Selectmen's office.

Ms. Mackinnon noted that the Town of Colchester is applying with the national Wildlife Federation to get certification. To get certified, a certain number of points must be garnered. Ms. Mackinnon proposed that another subcommittee be created to steward this and partner with existing events already going on within the town. Ms. Mackinnon will bring further information to the next meeting.

Mr. Tarbox announced that the Eightmile Wild and Scenic will be holding an event in mid-October.

Ms. Merrow noted that organizations can be involved, but that the CC does not lend itself to having a table at the event.

Ms. Merrow noted that the Eightmile Wild and Scenic will be holding a RiverFest event on Sat., Oct. 16, from 2-5pm in Devil's Hopyard. There will be hikes, and Mr. Ventres is cooking clam chowder and chili. There will be reptiles, birds of prey and other attractions.

Mr. Smith noted that Nov. 13, the Environmental Roundtable and East Haddam Land Trust will be holding an event to honor people who have donated or sold land to the Land Trust or the town. Mr. Ventres is cooking for that event as well, and it will be held at the Moodus Sportsmen's Club.

8. Adjournment

Conservation Commission Meeting, Town of East Haddam, October 5, 2010

Motion by Mr. Mackinnon to adjourn, second by Mr. Tarbox, unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon A. Hawkins
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- The Habitat, Summer 2010, Vol. 22, Number 2